

Galicia Untamed – Intelligent Travel

The pilgrims are 1 _____, fervent, determined as they pass through the Galician village of [O Cebreiro](#), in northwestern Spain. The dogs do not bark; they see pilgrims every day. O Cebreiro is on the final leg of the [Way of St. James](#), a 2 _____ route that ends in Galicia's capital, [Santiago de Compostela](#).

Mine is a different pilgrimage. Not across the 3 _____ mountains of northern Spain. Not for the remission of sins. **Mine is a pilgrimage into my Celtic ancestry.** Celts once inhabited much of Europe, including the wild 4 _____ of the Atlantic Ocean, from Scotland south through Wales, Cornwall (where my ancestors resided), Brittany, and northern Spain.

That they established themselves this far south surprises many, but the evidence is all around me. In O Cebreiro, 5 _____ *palloza* huts, peaked like the mountains beyond, are based on Celtic designs.

Stone walls of ancient pallozas 6 _____ [Santa Tecla hill](#), on Galicia's western coast. Looking down from this site — already old when the Romans came — to the modern suburbs of [A Guarda](#) below, I can feel the 7 _____ of human existence, of communities following one another for 2,000 years.

Stone is everywhere in Galicia. Hundreds of 8 _____ stone granaries, set on pillars to keep rodents out, grace the countryside. In Galicia's western reaches, by the town of Muxía, sits the church [Nuestra Señora de la Barca](#).

Below it, the 9 _____ [Pedra dos Cadris](#) draws visitors with its purported healing powers. Pilgrims come here after completing the Way of St. James to crawl under the stone, repeating a local tradition.

Celtic rituals appear to inform Galicia's *queimada*, or "burn," which refers to both an alcoholic drink and the ceremony around it. In the town of [Piornedo](#), I watch as the drink — made with a liqueur, sugar, lemon peel, and coffee beans — 10 _____ in a clay pot. It then is set on fire. As flames leap into the night, an incantation is read: "Demons, goblins, and devils, spirits of misty vales...howl of the dog...omen of death...maws of the satyr..." Finally, the steaming brew is 11 _____ into cups. I drink. No witches; I have a good time.

Galician nights have their own wildness. At O Bar de Fredi, musicians beat tambourines to songs they chant with 12 _____ energy, a music that has filled the valleys here for centuries. **Like other pilgrims, in Galicia I have found what I've been looking for: living echoes of my Celtic ancestry.**

stews	verdant	weathered	frantic
fringes	crowd	continuity	medieval
thatched	flared	steadfast	ladled